

From Transi Tomb to Castrum Doloris (PNRS Conference, 18–21 Oct 2012)

Abbotsford, British Columbia, Oct 18–21, 2012

Deadline: Jul 20, 2012

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The Pacific Northwest Renaissance Society Conference

Call for Papers

"From Transi Tomb to Castrum Doloris: Lost and Found in Translation, or Early Modern Sepulchral Art and Ritual in East-Central and Northern Europe"

During the early modern period in Europe new religious, political, and social concepts and attitudes led to a new mentality in relation to death with a growing practice of creating monuments to the deceased. At the same time this period was marked by a rapidly expanding and international, if not homogenous, process of migration and cultural interaction. As a result, new frameworks of contact and exchange were established across physical geographies, cultural traditions and religious differences. These new frameworks contributed to the formulation of new forms of visual and material culture related to sepulchral art and ritual. North of the Alps, commemorative visual culture and ceremony took place in response to imported and local stimuli, and it often required translation, adaptation, and transformation of its themes and forms. Early modern funerary art, tombs and burial ceremonies demonstrate not only Christian values but also reinforce political and social hierarchies by representing both private and public display of civic virtues. Those who commissioned tomb portraiture and sculpture usually possessed wealth and power, and often transferred - through commissions and wills - their earthly ambitions and excess into sepulchral monuments and ceremonies. This practice was often in conflict with the value of humility and the teaching of the Christian church. Furthermore, following the Reformation, funerals became a means of exhibiting wealth and translating it into status for both Catholics and Protestants alike. Concurrently, people's concern for the pomp and ceremony of their own funerals testified to piety, charity and sense of personal reputation. Ranging from religious to political instruments, from Roman-Catholic (pre-Reformation and post-Tridentine) to Protestant, and from the political body of the monarch to the individual aristocrat and bourgeoisie, these tombs, monuments and rituals, while mixing Western traditions with Ottoman elements, show broader cultural context of transmissions of particular religious, social and ideological vision of the world and were translated into and conveyed through material means.

This panel aims to explore how cross-cultural encounters in Europe -- south-north and west-east -- can be seen to have shaped the production of funerary art. Across these broad networks of exchange the participants of European culture -- patrons, intellectuals, artists and architects -- shaped, promoted and disseminated new forms, motifs and functions of sepulchral art through the processes of translation and adaptation.

Submissions related to all geographical areas of Eastern, Central and Northern Europe are welcome, in particular those related to cross-cultural encounters and translations; through the time period of 1450-1700; as well as contributions that engage the art and visual culture of East-Central Europe – including Hungary, Poland, Bohemia, Moravia.

Topics for discussion may include, but are not limited to:

- Materiality of memory: tombs, chapels, mausolea, monuments, memorials
- Ephemeral architecture: catafalques, castra doloris
- Pompa funebris or funerary rite as performance and theatre
- Celebration of the deceased: transient moment and enduring remembrance
- Translatio of relics
- Death masks
- Coffin portraiture
- Armored bodies as transmission of property
- Tombs of children
- Engraved brasses and sculpted tombs with shrouded figures
- From verbal to visual: eulogies and epitaphs
- From vanitas to melancholy
- Adaptations and translations of various funerary customs from ancient/pagan rites or different ethnic traditions
- Material marking of the transformation from life to death, from transient to eternal, and from body to soul
- Transitional states of mourning
- The fashion of mourning: public expressions of grief through customs and costumes
- Transitions from one medium to another: drawn, painted, printed and literary records of tombs, sepulchral architecture and funerary ceremonies

Please submit an abstract of no more than 250 words for a 20-minute paper with a paper title and one-page CV with institutional affiliation and contact information to Aleksandra Idzior (aleksandra.idzior@ufv.ca), University of the Fraser Valley, Abbotsford by 20 July 2012.

Reference:

CFP: From Transi Tomb to Castrum Doloris (PNRS Conference, 18-21 Oct 2012). In: ArtHist.net, Jul 4, 2012 (accessed Dec 19, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/3591>>.